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COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA IN THE UNITED STATES

Part I
Theory, Objectives, and Organization

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FOIA SERIES
Communist Propaganda
(U.S., Part I

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
John Edgar Hoover, Director

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November 1956

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PREFACE

This is the first of a series of detailed studies which will examine communist propaganda in the United States from the founding of the Communist Party, USA, in 1919 to the present.

The importance of communist propaganda in the present era cannot be overemphasized. Propaganda, the major weapon of the Communist Party, USA, is directed ceaselessly and relentlessly against our Government, our institutions, and our traditions. Within the next decade, if no grave military emergency develops, we can expect the communists to launch their greatest propaganda attack against the American system and way of life. It is vitally important to understand and to successfully counter this propaganda assault.

The first monograph of this series deals generally with the history and nature of propaganda, treats of the theory and role of communist propaganda, shows the strategy and tactics of communist propaganda, and describes the coordination and organization of communist propaganda.

Succeeding volumes will concern such aspects as target groups of communist propaganda in the United States; propaganda techniques and devices; channels and vehicles of domestic, Soviet, and other foreign communist

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propaganda within the United States; and will include an analysis of several celebrated American communist propaganda campaigns.

This monograph has been compiled from both public sources and confidential information. The public sources are identified at the end of this monograph. The confidential sources have been retained by this Bureau.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Summary

Although the word "propaganda" is comparatively modern in origin, the practice of propaganda dates back to ancient times. Over the centuries, propaganda has been used, in one form or another, by individuals, groups, and nations as a method of manipulating the attitudes, opinions, and actions of others.

Propaganda came into extensive and aggressive use by the Nazis, fascists, and communists after World War I. They evolved and perfected propaganda into a potent and lethal instrument to be employed in conjunction and in coordination with military, conspiratorial, diplomatic, and economic weapons for use toward attaining their goals of world conquest.

The communists, in particular, as the most avid theorists and practitioners of the art of propaganda, have, during the past 40 years, made the greatest and most effective use of propaganda in the history of the world.

B. Conclusions

1. Propaganda has occupied a primary and integral role in communist activities since the modern world communist movement was launched by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels over a hundred years ago.

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2. Since the time of Marx and Engels, propaganda has become the communists' most powerful and effective weapon as a means of arousing the revolutionary consciousness of the masses and preparing them for revolutionary action.

3. Communist leaders in the Soviet Union and in the United States have ceaselessly emphasized, valued, and used propaganda above all other types of Communist Party activity.

4. The communists -- particularly Lenin -- have developed a vast volume of detailed theory on the importance of and the need for propaganda as a vital component of general communist strategy and tactics.

5. In their announced goal to communize the world, the communists employ propaganda as a weapon in concert with all other weapons -- military, conspiratorial, diplomatic, and economic.

6. The fundamental strategic aims of communist propaganda are: (1) to spread the Marxist-Leninist doctrine among the masses in order to prepare them for revolutionary action under the leadership and guidance of the Communist Party; (2) to divide, confuse, and weaken the opposition to communism; and (3) to defend the interests of the Soviet Union wherever possible.

7. Propaganda has played a dominant part in the world communist movement in the past 40 years in explaining and justifying the drastic twists and turns in the communist line.

8. Communist propaganda throughout the world, though flexible, has been extraordinarily similar and consistent, mainly because of the direction and coordination given it by the Agitation and Propaganda Section (Agitprop) attached to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the top world-communist policy-making body.

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I. GENERAL NATURE OF PROPAGANDA

A. Propaganda Defined

Propaganda may be defined as a deliberate, conscious, and systematic attempt by individuals, groups, or nations to form, influence, guide, and direct the thoughts, feelings, conduct, and actions of other individuals, groups, or nations in behalf of predetermined ends.

B. History of Propaganda

The word "propaganda" stems from the Latin phrase de propaganda fide, meaning "propagation of the faith." This phrase was first given currency in the seventeenth century to describe the dissemination of a religious doctrine.

Not until after the middle of the nineteenth century was propaganda used to refer to any kind of institution or organization for propagating a new doctrine or system of doctrines -- secular or religious. Soon it was applied to any attempt at proselytizing, that is, the zealous disseminating of a point of view.

Thus, gradually, the meaning of propaganda changed. By the

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early part of the twentieth century, it had come to signify any planned or concerted attempt to influence public opinion, particularly by indirect means. But it was still an uncommon word rarely used. During and immediately after World War I, propaganda lost, in the public mind, its religious connotation and came to take a sinister meaning which has persisted to this day.

Propaganda today has been given the name of political warfare, psychological warfare, or propaganda warfare. But in its elements of persuasion and intimidation, propaganda is not new. The antiquity of the practice of propaganda -- as distinguished from its name -- is apparent from the fact that many of its methods have been used for thousands of years. Some were employed by leaders of primitive society to manipulate tribal conduct. Some were developed by the priests of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Judea. Demagogues, tyrants, and politicians of Greece and Rome used propaganda to sway the people. The walls of Pompeii were found to be covered with election appeals.

During the Puritan Revolution in England, propaganda, in the form of pamphlets and newsletters, was considered by Cromwell as important as any military weapon. Both the American Revolution and the French Revolution were wars of ideas in which propaganda played a vital part. Napoleon

subsidized a London newspaper; Metternich, the Rothschilds, and Bismarck employed agents to spread favorable press reports. In the American Civil War, both the North and the South sent agents to England to plead their causes. Prior to the outbreak of World War I , Czarist Russia expended huge sums of money in France alone on counterrevolutionary propaganda.

In the years following World War I, propaganda was developed, forged, and perfected by the Nazis, fascists, and communists into a powerful and deadly weapon. Military power was not the sole weapon used by the Nazis and fascists in achieving their abortive triumphs; nor has military strength been the only reason for the enormous successes attained by the communists. The free world can testify to the consummate skill and the devastating effect with which these aggressors employed the instrument of propaganda in coordination with military, conspiratorial, diplomatic, and economic weapons in their efforts to conquer the world.

Thus, the age of propaganda in which we live differs from that of the past by the continuous, unremitting battle being waged to win men's minds and their loyalties. From the time of the violent seizure of power by the Russian Bolsheviks nearly four decades ago, the world has been engulfed in a massive ideological struggle with the stakes involving the freedom of hundreds

of millions of persons and the survival of democratic society. All the social, economic, cultural, religious, and political ideas, traditions, and institutions cherished and revered by the free world over the centuries have been under ceaseless, ruthless attack.

Of the torrent of propaganda which has flooded the world through the years, communist propaganda has been the most expertly conceived and executed. In imagination, audacity, intensity, volume, and effectiveness, communist propaganda on a world-wide scale dwarfs all other propaganda campaigns in history.(1) (2) (3) (4)

II. THEORY AND ROLE OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

A. Communist Distinction between Propaganda and Agitation

Contemporary American authorities on propaganda give rather scant attention to propaganda in contrast to agitation. They are inclined to use the word propaganda to include all efforts aimed at influencing public opinion. These writers view the communist differentiation between propaganda and agitation as a distinction without any real difference. Conceived as a method, one writer says, there is no distinguishing agitation from propaganda.(5) Another considers agitation as a special case of propaganda.(6)

1. Plekhanov and Lenin's Differentiation

Communist theory, on the other hand, goes to extreme pains to distinguish carefully between propaganda and agitation, and there are many discussions of this distinction in communist literature. The basic communist position on propaganda and agitation derives from the classic definition of Georgi Plekhanov, generally considered the father of Russian Marxism. He stated: "A propagandist presents many ideas to one or a few persons; an agitator presents only one or a few ideas, but he presents them to a mass of people."(7)

Lenin accepted this distinction as fundamental. The difference between the two roles was explained by him in these words:

> "...a propagandist, dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the reasons why crises are inevitable in modern society, must describe how present society must inevitably become transformed into socialist society, etc. In a word, he must present 'many ideas,' so many indeed that they will be understood as a whole only by a (comparatively) few persons. An agitator, however, speaking on the same subject will take as an illustration a fact that is most widely known and outstanding among his audience, say, the death from starvation of the family of an unemployed worker, the growing impoverishment, etc., and utilising this fact, which is known to all and sundry, will direct all his efforts to presenting a single idea to the 'masses,' i.e., the idea of the senseless contradiction between the increase of wealth and increase of poverty; he will strive to rouse discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice, and leave a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist. Consequently, the propagandist operates chiefly by means of the printed word; the agitator operates with the living word...." (8)

(Underscored words are in italic type in the original.)

This distinction between the presentation of many ideas on a subject to a small number of people and advancing a single idea to a mass of people was recognized by Lenin as the fundamental basis for distinguishing between propaganda and agitation. He vigorously rejected as "sheer nonsense" the notion that propaganda was primarily the elucidation of a problem and agitation, mainly a call to action. The theorist who writes a research paper

on tariff policy, he contended, calls for a struggle for free trade no less than the propagandist writing for the periodical press and the agitator making speeches. The last stage in the process may be the act of signing petitions by large numbers of people; but the call to action, Lenin insisted, came as much from the theorist and the propagandist as from the agitator who carried the petitions.(9)

Later communist discussions on this distinction have been based largely on the analyses by Plekhanov and Lenin. The idea that the presence or absence of a call to action can be used to distinguish agitation and propaganda has been strongly repudiated. The related proposition that agitation is primarily incitement -- an effort to excite, arouse, and motivate -- has also been criticized. Finally, the idea that the distinction may be based on the medium utilized has been found equally unacceptable. Although Lenin had said that the printed word was the chief instrument of the propagandist, and the spoken word the main tool of the agitator, this is by no means a necessary condition, and communist theory holds that both propaganda and agitation may be printed or oral. Hence, a lecture on a particular aspect of Leninist theory is regarded as being no less propaganda than a magazine article on the subject; and a newspaper article calling for an increase in wages, no less

agitation than the personal appeal of a Communist Party member in some shop. (10)

2. Communist Propaganda and Agitation Defined

Thus, in the hands of the communists, propaganda and agitation are supposed to be something quite different. Communist propaganda is strictly defined by the communists as the intensive elucidation of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, and of the history of the Communist Party and its tasks. As such, it is regarded as one of the most important standard components of Party activity. It is through the propaganda of Marxism-Leninism that Party members are "armed" with requisite theory and with knowledge of the Marxian laws governing the development of society and political struggles. Communist propaganda is, therefore, directed primarily toward the more "advanced" segments of society -- Party members and the non-Party intelligentsia.

Communist agitation, in turn, is defined by the communists as the chief means for the political education of the broad working-class masses and seeks to acquaint them with the Communist Party's slogans and decisions, to explain the Party's policy, and to maneuver and mobilize the workers for

active and conscious participation in the building of the new social order.[11][12]

In this series of studies on communist propaganda in the United States, however, agitation will be regarded and treated as a component of propaganda. Agitation and propaganda cannot be separated logically into unrelated and isolated compartments. They are like two horses working together as a powerful team.

B. Role of Propaganda in Communist Theory

1. Communism Widely Propagandistic

"As a messianic movement," one American writer has observed, "Communism is inherently propagandistic."[13] Another has described communism as "the child of propaganda."[14] Communism began in conspiracy and launched almost simultaneously a deceptive and appealing propaganda, without which its growth and development could not have been achieved. The beginning of modern communism was dramatized by a pamphlet, The Communist Manifesto, published in 1848 by two German social theorists, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. This communist "classic" in itself is little more than vivid, sweeping propaganda.

For the next half century, the ideas of Marx and Engels were kept alive, with virtually no organization, backing, or support, by the propaganda of their adherents. Marx and Engels had not concerned themselves seriously

with problems of organization, strategy, and tactics. They dealt earnestly with ideas and events, and ideas and events are the weapons of propaganda.(15)

In the years since Marx and Engels, propaganda has become the most powerful single weapon in the communist arsenal as the means for arousing the consciousness of the masses, luring them toward communism, and preparing and organizing them for revolutionary activity. The communists view propaganda as a weapon to be used constantly and in close coordination with other weapons. It is used both to supplement military, conspiratorial, diplomatic, or economic measures and to substitute for them when these measures are impossible, impractical, unproductive, or uneconomical.

The communists have not been secretive about the enormous importance they attach to agitation and propaganda. From Marx to Khrushchev, leaders of the international communist movement have valued and utilized agitation and propaganda above all other types of activity, and they have never ceased to stress the primary significance of propaganda.(16)

2. Propaganda Stressed by Lenin

The life and works of Lenin, in particular, reflect the great emphasis this leader constantly placed on agitation and propaganda. In 1895, Lenin is said to have personally drawn up the first leaflet addressed

to the workers of Russia, using economic demands to raise the class consciousness of the masses. The leaflet was directed to the workers of a plant in an industrial center. Four copies of the leaflet were printed by hand and distributed. Two were confiscated. The remaining two were passed from worker to worker.(17)

While Plekhanov attached great importance to propaganda, Lenin was the first to develop thoroughly those practical aspects of communist theory which led to such emphasis on propaganda. Marx had stressed economic determinism in the historical process -- that the modes of production finally determine the outcome of historical movements. This meant that capitalism has within its structure the seeds of its own inevitable destruction and its ultimate replacement by socialism. He provided little in the way of concrete strategy and guidance. Lenin stressed, as did Marx, that revolution is inevitable, but unlike Marx, he devoted greater detailed attention to how it was to be done and to the need for planning and organizing the revolution. He held that revolutionary consciousness would not develop automatically within the working class, but had to be brought to them from without by the ideologically trained and dedicated Marxists. There had to be a highly disciplined party both to provide the necessary organization

and leadership, and to indoctrinate the masses.

Lenin, who created the Communist Party as it is known today, wrote and spoke extensively on the role of the closely knit and tightly disciplined Communist Party as the "general staff" of the revolutionary movement and on the strategy and tactics by which revolution was to be accomplished. From these concepts, there followed naturally his theory on the role of propaganda in the communist movement. Propaganda and agitation were to be tools and instruments by which intellectual converts would be made, and by which the minds of the masses would be prepared for revolution. There was to be not only verbal propaganda, in the nature of slogans, doctrines, revelations, and denunciations; but also propaganda of the deed, in the form of organization and action programs.(18)

As far back as 1901, Lenin wrote an article called "Where To Begin?" in which he stressed the necessity for propaganda.(19) In 1902, in a more complete treatment entitled "What Is To Be Done?," he gave detailed attention to the role of propaganda and agitation, stating:

> "We must 'go among all classes of the people' as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators and as organisers.... The principal thing, of course, is propaganda and agitation among all strata of the people...."(20)
>
> (Underscored words are in italic type in the original.)

During the long years of his exile from Russia, before his dramatic return in 1917, Lenin was forging a revolutionary Marxist party around himself. His only weapon during this period was the written and spoken word. He had no other way to impose his ideas on anyone. Principally through his skill as a speaker and his deftness with the pen, Lenin rose to the leadership of the revolutionary movement which finally destroyed the czars and achieved for him supreme and absolute power in Russia.(21)

In May, 1920, after the Red Revolution had firmly established communism in Russia, Lenin wrote his work, "Left Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, which was addressed to foreign communist parties affiliated with the Communist International.* This document was written just prior to the convening of the Second World Congress of the Communist International at Moscow in July-August, 1920. Lenin enjoined these parties as to their responsibilities:

> "...Every sacrifice must be made, the greatest obstacles must be overcome, in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently, precisely in those institutions, societies and associations--even the most reactionary -- to which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses belong...."(22)

*The Third International, commonly known as the Communist International or, in its abbreviated form, as the Comintern, was established in Moscow in 1919 as a union of communist parties throughout the world. Admission to the Comintern was contingent upon the acceptance of 21 conditions of admission. The Communist Party in the United States became an affiliate in 1921 but disaffiliated in 1940.

3. Communist International on Role of Propaganda

The Second World Congress adopted 21 conditions of admission to the Communist International on the part of foreign communist parties. Among those relating to propaganda and agitation were the following:

> "1. The general propaganda and agitation should bear a really Communist character, and should correspond to the programme and decisions of the Third International. . . ."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Wherever the followers of the Third International have access, and whatever means of propaganda are at their disposal, whether the columns of newspapers, popular meetings, labor unions or co-operatives, --it is indispensable for them not only to denounce the bourgeoisie, but also its assistants and agents -- reformists of every color and shade."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "4. A persistent and systematic propaganda and agitation is necessary in the army, where Communist groups should be formed in every military organization. . . .
>
> "5. A systematic and regular propaganda is necessary in the rural districts. . . ."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "9. Every party desirous of belonging to the Communist International should be bound to carry on systematic and persistent Communist work in the labor unions, co-operatives and other labor organizations of the masses. . . ."
>
> . . . . . .

"14. Each party desirous of affiliating with the Communist International should be obliged to render every possible assistance to the Soviet Republics in their struggle against all counter-revolutionary forces. The Communist parties should carry on a precise and definite propaganda to induce the workers to refuse to transport any kind of military equipment intended for fighting against the Soviet Republics, and should also by legal or illegal means carry on a propaganda amongst the troops sent against the workers' republics, etc."(23)

At the Third World Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1921, rules were drawn up for the construction and organization of communist parties. A section devoted to agitation and propaganda emphasized that

"...Our chief general duty to the open revolutionary struggle is to carry on revolutionary propaganda and agitation....

"Communist propaganda and agitation must be made to take root in the very midst of the workers, out of their common interest and aspirations and especially out of their common struggles.

"The most important point to remember is -- that communist propaganda must be of a revolutionary character...." (24)

4. Stalin on Importance of Propaganda

Stalin, who succeeded Lenin as leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, fully subscribed to Lenin's concept and theory on the Party as the "general staff" and "vanguard" of the working class, and on the Party's role in propagandizing the masses. (25) (26)

Shortly after the death of Lenin in 1924, Stalin delivered a series of lectures on Leninism, in one of which he declared:

> "The point here is not that the vanguard shall realise the impossibility of preserving the old order of things and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the vast masses, shall understand this inevitability and display their readiness to support the vanguard.... The task is to enable the vast masses to understand from their own experiences the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime..."(27)

In a report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1939, Stalin stated:

> "There is hardly need to dwell on the cardinal importance of Party propaganda...if our Party propaganda for some reason or other goes lame...then our entire state and Party work must inevitably languish...."(28)

5. American Communist Leaders Emphasize Propaganda

Abraham Markoff, who was a prominent early American communist leader, had this to say about the importance of agitation and propaganda:

> "Agitation and propaganda constitute a very essential part of the daily activities of the Communist Party. Through our press, at mass meetings, demonstrations; by means of slogans, lectures, discussions, study circles, classes; through our cultural activities, we endeavor to reach the broad masses of workers and other sections of the toiling population, as well as the intellectual strata. Our aim is to educate the masses politically on the basis of Marxist-Leninist teachings, to draw them closer to the revolutionary movement of the working class, to bring many of them into the ranks of the Communist Party, the Young Communist League, into the ranks of the revolutionary unions, into the opposition groups within the reformist unions, into the various mass organizations. In short, to organize the masses, to bring them ideologically and organizationally under the influence of the Party, to lead them to proletarian victory over the capitalist forces...."(29)

Eugene Dennis, now general secretary of the Communist Party, USA, pointed out the necessity for agitation and propaganda when he declared:

> "We must increase our vigilance and fortify our Marxist-Leninist struggle on the ideological and theoretical fronts. We must vastly improve every aspect of our mass agitation -- our press, our use of the radio and our meetings -- so as to reach and convince millions of workers and progressives and set them in motion.
>
> "We must raise our political-organizational sights, and boldly pass over from recruiting thousands of workers to organizing tens of thousands of militant workers and progressives speedily and directly into the ranks of our Party, the Marxist party of the American working class." (30)

III. OBJECTIVES, STRATEGY, AND TACTICS OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

A. Communist Fundamentals

1. Strategic Goals of Communism

Communist propaganda cannot be understood apart from the general objectives, strategy, and tactics of the world communist movement. The primary and historic goal of communists is, of course, to overthrow capitalism and establish communism throughout the world. The Communist Manifesto, the general creed of communists everywhere, in 1848 outlined the "historic mission" of the working class -- seizure of power, establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, abolition of capitalism, and formation of a new, international communist society. (31)

The basic strategic aims of the Communist Party, USA, are generally recognized to be the following:

1. To maintain and further contact with the masses in order to extend its influence beyond its own membership

2. To safeguard the interests of the Soviet Union wherever possible

3. To do everything possible to maintain its status as a professed legal and orthodox political party

4. To overthrow the existing form of government and to substitute in its place a socialist form of government modeled on that of the Soviet Union u

These strategic aims are by their very nature basic and fundamental, not only to the Communist Party, USA, but also to all communist parties which are not in power. At the same time, these aims are closely related to each other as well as to the strategic objectives of world communism. The strategy and tactics of all communist parties in noncommunist countries are unconditionally subordinated to the one ultimate and unvarying objective of overthrowing the capitalist society and establishing in its place a socialist state similar to that existing in Soviet Russia. However, it is also a cardinal principle of communist tactics that direct revolutionary action can be attempted only under those conditions most favorable for its success. Obviously, the "historic situation" is not propitious for the overthrow of the United States Government at the present time; therefore, the Communist Party, USA, must necessarily employ the main open weapons at its disposal -- agitation and propaganda. u

In the 37 years the Communist Party, USA, has been in existence, its line has undergone a number of drastic, and at times even mystifying, changes -- each representing an outward contradiction of the previous line, u

but each, in the words of Louis F. Budenz, reflecting "the state of affairs in the Soviet Union with the sensitiveness of a seismograph to an earthquake."(32)

Quite naturally, these periodic adjustments have caused considerable confusion regarding the real motives and objectives of the communist movement. The many convolutions of the communist line are not intended simply to mislead the noncommunist world. Instead, they are part of a carefully devised pattern which aims ultimately to establish a world-wide Soviet dictatorship. They are, in short, part of communist strategy and tactics.

2. Distinction between Strategy and Tactics

Communist writers make a great point of distinguishing between strategy and tactics. Strategy, they observe, is concerned with the long-range plans and major objectives of the revolutionary movement; tactics, on the other hand, relate to the immediate situation and to the limited or temporary goals of the revolution. Stalin depicted the difference:

> "Tactics constitute a part of strategy subordinated to it and serving it. Tactics are concerned not with war in general, but with its individual episodes, battles, and engagements. While the aim of strategy is to win the war, or, let us say, to bring the struggle against tsarism to a conclusion, the aim of tactics,

on the contrary, is to win engagements and battles, and successfully to conduct campaigns and operation that are more or less suited to the concrete situation of the struggle at any given moment." (33)

> "...While the aim of strategy is to win the war, let us say against tsarism or against the bourgeoisie, to carry the struggle against tsarism or against the bourgeoisie to its end, tactics concern themselves with less important aims, as they strive, not to win the war as a whole, but rather to win a particular engagement, or a particular battle; to carry through successfully a particular campaign or action corresponding to the concrete circumstances of the rise or decline of the revolution. Tactics are a part of strategy, subordinate and subservient to it." (34)

As a result of this distinction between strategy and tactics, communist theorists and propagandists are often able to justify the most abrupt and violent changes in Party policy as merely "tactical maneuvers," at the same time insisting that the Party's underlying aims or "strategic goals" remain intact. Thus, when the USSR concluded a nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939, after years of denouncing the Nazis and posing as the leader of a great "antifascist crusade," communist apologists could claim that this outrageous about-face was merely a "tactical shift" calculated to forestall an "imminent" capitalist attack on the Soviet Union, but a shift which in no way altered the Soviet Union's basic strategy -- its "heroic" struggle against the forces of fascism and imperialism.

The tactics of the Communist Party can be divided into two broad categories: offensive tactics, such as demonstrations, strikes, inflammatory propaganda, and, of course, direct insurrection; and defensive tactics, such as peaceful alliances with noncommunist groups, legitimate political activity, and emphasis on reform rather than revolution.

Despite the extreme diversity and flexibility of communist tactics, the Party's basic revolutionary objectives have never changed. Thus, although the Party has frequently been forced to adopt defensive tactics, its ultimate goal continues to be an offensive one, namely, the violent overthrow of capitalism and the complete destruction of bourgeois society.

The communists believe, in fact, that no peaceful solution of the class struggle is possible and that class war can only end in the annihilation of either the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. For this reason, communist strategists have constantly reminded Party members that, whatever temporary compromises, alliances, or "tactical retreats" the Party might be called upon to make, they must never expect a permanent truce with the bourgeoisie or a peaceful settlement of class differences.

The communists' firm belief that the class struggle is an irreconcilable one which can only be settled by force and violence was originally enunciated in The Communist Manifesto:

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." (35)

3. Strategic Aims of Communist Propaganda

The over-all strategic aims of communist propaganda are:

1. To spread the Marxist-Leninist doctrine among the masses in order to prepare and organize them for ultimate revolutionary action under the leadership and guidance of the Communist Party

2. To divide, confuse, and weaken the opposition to communism

3. To defend the interests of the Soviet Union wherever possible (36) (37)

Some of the specific strategic objectives of communist propaganda are:

1. To aggravate the contradictions and animosities existing among the noncommunist nations by inciting one noncommunist country against another (In pursuit of this goal, the communists today seek to split the West and, in particular, to isolate the United States.)

2. To seize upon all points of weakness, friction, and tension in existing society and exacerbate them (In this connection, the communists

have sought for years to exploit the disputes between labor and capital and the tensions between the various races.)

3. To exploit the differences between noncommunist powers and their colonies by playing upon the nationalist aspirations of colonial and semicolonial areas, and by representing communism as a liberating force (Thus, the Soviet Union poses as the champion of the underdog, untainted by the colonialist stigma it pins on the West.)(38)

B. United-Front Tactics

No consideration of the general features of communist strategy and tactics and the integral role propaganda plays in them would be complete without mention of two specific tactics employed extensively by the Communist Party; namely, the so-called "united front" and the policy of "immediate demands." These two tactics have occupied an especially important part in communist strategy and propaganda throughout the world and in the United States during the past 37 years.

Whatever their avowed purposes may be in establishing united-front actions, the communists' real intentions are as follows:

1. To extend their influence over the noncommunist masses, particularly organized labor

2. To acquire leadership of the masses

3. To undermine the influence of rival noncommunist working-class groups

4. To prepare the way, through propaganda and agitation, for eventual direct revolutionary action

Since 1919, united-front tactics have passed through six major periods or phases, each reflecting a pronounced shift in Soviet foreign policy and each necessitating an abrupt, complete, and full-scale change in communist propaganda and agitation.

1. United Front from Above, 1919-28

During the period 1919-28, communist parties throughout the world sought principally to establish a united front of labor based on a struggle for specific working-class demands; such as, higher wages, shorter hours, improved working conditions, and the like. Efforts in this direction consisted chiefly of attempts to reach agreement with the leaders of other working-class groups, particularly the socialist parties. Little appeal was made directly to the workers themselves or to the rank and file of the socialist parties.

The "united front from above" proved to be largely ineffective. Although the communists and the socialists had numerous common interests, close cooperation between the two groups was never achieved. This was primarily due to the fact that the communists tended to overemphasize their own revolutionary program, thereby alienating the more moderate socialist leaders. Moreover, inasmuch as the Communist Party had it genesis in a number of countries as an offshoot of the older socialist movement, the formation of the Communist Party had caused a violent split in the socialist ranks. An aftermath of ill will existed among both socialists and communists which virtually precluded any real cooperation.

2. United Front from Below, 1928-35

The tactic of international communism, during the years 1928-35, took a sharp turn to the left in the direction of open revolutionary action. Cooperation with noncommunist groups was looked upon with disfavor as "right opportunism." Use of the united-front tactic, with its stress on reform and cooperation rather than "revolutionary independence," was greatly reduced. For propaganda purposes, world communism still proclaimed itself willing to work with other groups for common working-class goals,

but in actual practice, the communists refused to compromise their revolutionary program in the slightest degree. While propaganda during this period was directed to the workers themselves, in effect the "united front from below" was largely a merger of the Communist Party with its own sympathizers and followers, rather than a coalition of representative working-class elements.

Even though the communists enjoyed some momentary successes, especially among the unemployed at the depths of the depression in the early 1930's, in the long run the "united front from below" proved just as much a failure as the "united front from above." Within the narrow limits set by the Party for united-front activity during this period, the "united front from below" became a united front in name only. The net result of these highly sectarian tactics was that the communist movement became increasingly isolated from the masses.

3. United Front against Fascism, 1935-39

By 1935, the failure of the "united front from below" was conceded by the communists and they were ready to execute another drastic change of tactics. The immediate cause of the switch in tactics at that time was the rise of fascism in Germany, Italy, and Japan. World communism instantly

and clearly recognized this new menace whose ruthless practices were so similar to its own. In August, 1935, the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International convened in Moscow for the express purpose of mobilizing an antifascist offensive.

Georgi Dimitroff, general secretary of the Communist International, delivered the main report of the Congress. He proposed, in substance, that the international communist movement should give up the militant, "left sectarian" tactics in effect since 1928 and, instead, undertake to create the broadest possible "united front against fascism."

Dimitroff indicated that world communism's future united-front activities not only would be aimed exclusively at members of organized labor, as in the past, but also would be directed at the unorganized masses -- youth, women, farmers, intellectuals, and others -- in short, at any potential antifascist ally. Moreover, they would be centered around any issue-- economic, social, cultural, or political -- so long as the general objective was an antifascist one.

Dimitroff compared these proposed maneuvers with the famous Trojan-horse stratagem utilized by the ancient Greeks in their capture of Troy and suggested that the communists use the same tactic. (39)

Communist parties everywhere soon put Dimitroff's recommendation into practice by launching the so-called "popular" or "people's" front. Communist front organizations began to mushroom in the United States at the slightest provocation and on every conceivable issue ranging from topics of such universal interest as fascism and war to matters of purely local and transient concern.

Virtually every existing organization or group immediately became a potential target for communist infiltration and united-front propaganda. Among the prime targets for the new united-front tactic were the so-called "intellectual" groups -- entertainers, teachers, artists, writers, scientists, and the like. Special efforts were also devoted to establishing united-front activities among the various racial, religious, and nationality groups.

The new antifascist tactic inaugurated by the Seventh World Congress proved to be a tremendous success for the communists as it provided them with a powerful propaganda vehicle for spreading communism. By 1939, the membership of the Communist Party, USA, had reached a new high and many thousands of other persons had become involved in communist front activity of one sort or another. It was during this period that the American communists created the slogan, "Communism Is Twentieth Century Americanism."

4. United Front against Imperialism, 1939-41

The era of the "popular" or "people's" front came to a sudden and dramatic close in August, 1939, when the USSR and Germany consummated a mutual nonaggression treaty. Within a fortnight, World War II broke out. Literally overnight, communist propagandists were forced to execute a complete about-face. Great Britain, France, and the United States were now branded as "imperialist warmongers" responsible for the advent of war. Yesterday's slogans became things of the past. The new communist slogans directed against the United States were "Keep America Out of War" and "The Yanks Are NOT Coming."

Naturally, the alliance between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, coming as it did after four years of incessant denunciation of fascism, disillusioned large numbers of Party members and sympathizers and caused wholesale defections both from the Party itself and from the various front organizations. To offset the losses, the communists began to direct united-front propaganda at groups tending to be isolationist -- youth of military age and women.

5. United Front for Victory, 1941-45

With the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Nazis on June 22, 1941, the "imperialist capitalist" war was instantly transformed into a "war of

liberation" and a "people's crusade against fascism and oppression." The Communist Party, USA, again exhibited remarkable dexterity in reorienting its propaganda to meet the demands of this "new tactical situation." Peace-mobilization fronts and anti-imperialist leagues evaporated into thin air, and in their places came a whole galaxy of new front organizations formed around the themes of "unity," "national defense," and "all-out aid to the Soviet Union."

Following the Japanese attack on the United States at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the tempo of communist united-front activity was accelerated. American communists took full advantage of this fortuitous opportunity to ingratiate themselves with the noncommunist American public. The communists suddenly blossomed forth as superpatriots and ardent defenders of the American way of life by cooperating in war bond sales and in blood donation drives and in insisting on rigid enforcement of labor's "no-strike" pledge. They subordinated everything to the war effort which would result in aid to the Soviet Union. All criticism of American "imperialism" and "reaction" was dropped. The communists no longer opposed military training or conscription. They were now ready to cooperate in making American capitalism work effectively to win the war. The only major complaint the communists made against the United States during this period was that the American Armies did not open a second front in Europe early enough.

To further the illusion that the Communist Party in the United States had been "Americanized," the Communist Party, USA, even carried its tactics so far as to dissolve itself in May, 1944, being succeeded by the Communist Political Association.*

6. United Front for Peace, 1945 to Date

In anticipation of the end of World War II, the Communist Political Association, in July, 1945, reconstituted itself as the Communist Party, USA. Thereafter, the Communist Party, USA, once more faithfully parroting Soviet foreign policy, promptly reverted to its former militant offensive against "capitalist reaction" and "imperialism." Terms like "Wall Street warmongers," "American imperialism," and "capitalist oppression" reappeared in full force as the Party resumed its old-time, all-out attack on the American system. The "united front for victory" was converted into the "united front for peace."

With the formation in September, 1947, in Poland, of the Communist Information Bureau -- commonly called the Cominform -- as the successor organization to the Comintern, the Soviet Union announced that, in the interests of peace, its foreign policy was based on the possibility of the "peaceful coexistence," over a lengthy period, of capitalism and socialism.

* A year earlier, the USSR had taken a similar step as an ostensible expression of friendship between the Soviet Union and its allies by formally dissolving the Comintern.

Nonetheless, the USSR divided the postwar world into two divergent camps: the camp of peace and democracy, led by the Soviet Union and its satellites; and the camp of war and imperialism, headed by the United States and the Western Powers. The United States was singled out for the communists' most violent and abusive propaganda. Communist propaganda sought to depict the United States as a nation of "decadent capitalism" and "imperialist war-mongers" dominated by "Wall Street," aiming at world conquest, and blocking every effort of the communists for peaceful settlement.

While working to arouse popular opposition to such developments as the Marshall Plan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Point Four Program, American intervention in Korea, and American atom and hydrogen bomb research, the Soviet Union proclaimed its readiness and willingness to cooperate with any nation provided that nation agreed with the communists on the question of world peace.

With the death of Stalin in March, 1953, the Soviet Union began to exhibit a more flexible and less harsh approach. A "sweetness and light" policy was adopted. One manifestation of this "new look" was a moderation in the Soviet Union's propaganda of "hate the West" and "hate America."

Following the Geneva Conference in July, 1955, the "spirit of Geneva" began to prevail and the Soviet Union expanded its theme of "peaceful coexistence" to one of "competitive coexistence."

The current Soviet line, which has been developing since Stalin's death, was made official at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February, 1956. At that time, new tactics were adopted by the USSR intended to allay the suspicion and hostility of the noncommunist world and also to placate dissatisfied elements within the Soviet orbit. Stalin, as a result of his denigration and downgrading, became the scapegoat of the new line. To give credence to the Soviet Union's "new look," the Cominform was dissolved in April, 1956.

Under the new propaganda line, Soviet leaders seek:

1. To portray the USSR as more "democratic" as a result of their substitution of "collective leadership" for the one-man rule of Stalin and his "cult of the individual"

2. To present world communism as less violently revolutionary by calling for the achievement of "socialism" in noncommunist countries through "peaceful" or "parliamentary" means wherever possible

3. To persuade neutral countries to join the Soviet "peace" bloc

The Communist Party, USA, bowed to the new Soviet line in the midst of enormous confusion and much soul-searching on the part of Party leaders and rank-and-file members alike, as a consequence of the shocking revelations of the injustices and brutalities perpetrated under Stalin's leadership. In the process of accepting the new line, the Communist Party, USA, publicly confessed some of its own shortcomings as well as some of those of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But, characteristically, it applauded the present Soviet leaders for following a "morally and politically courageous" course and reiterated its resolution to continue to champion "the cause of socialism, proletarian internationalism and American-Soviet friendship."

C. "Partial" or "Immediate-Demand" Tactics

Another favorite and effective tactic widely used by the communists for propaganda purposes is the policy of "partial" or "immediate demands." By such phrases, the communists refer to those short-term or temporary demands which they advance in order to create fertile conditions for future revolutionary action. Typical of such demands are proposals for higher wages, shorter working hours, better housing, slum clearance, lower taxes, improved

social security, civil rights legislation, and world disarmament. The communist press, as well as the public speeches and statements of Party leaders, is replete with such propaganda demands.

Communist "immediate demands" vary greatly in scope and objectives. They may be local, regional, national, or international in range; they may be of interest to a vast majority of the population or to only a limited minority; they may involve economic, social, educational, or cultural issues; and they may vary in significance from a proposal for world peace to a demand for the admission of Negroes in a housing development. Each of the "immediate demands" put forward by the communists is legitimate and even popular, representing the desire for a specific and limited reform or change within the framework of the American capitalist system. More often than not, they do not originate with the communists at all, but with wholly noncommunist segments of the American people. The communists, recognizing their propaganda value, seize upon and make them their own.

The advantages the communists derive from the "immediate-demand" tactic are threefold:

First, by urging specific changes or reforms in which large numbers of noncommunists are vitally interested, the Party tends to identify

itself with the masses by fostering the illusion that it is really nothing more than a progressive, humanitarian, enlightened organization acting solely for the welfare of the American people. At the same time, the communists are able to pose as champions of the working class and, whenever the opportunity arises, to offer tangible evidence of their working-class leadership.

Second, the "immediate-demand" tactic is useful to the communists for the reason that it serves as a convenient facade behind which the Communist Party can carry on its ceaseless agitation and propaganda against the capitalist system. More important, the "immediate-demand" tactic enables the Party to inculcate subtly a feeling of class consciousness among the masses and to promote a general atmosphere of unrest and discontent among large sections of the population. For this reason, the Party's strenuous campaign for diverse "partial demands" is never allowed to subside. As soon as one set of demands is met, the communists promptly present fresh and stronger demands calculated to provoke a new controversy, to act as a new source of friction and unrest, and insidiously to remind the masses once again of the contradictions and weaknesses of the capitalist system. The substitution of fresh demands for those which have been satisfied or outmoded for one reason or another continues to be a never-ending cycle, the aim being to persuade

the working class gradually of the correctness and righteousness of communist policy and of the necessity for a new political, economic, and social system.

Third, the use of the "immediate-demand" tactic provides communists with an opportunity to work actively among the masses and to gain valuable experience in the art of propaganda and agitation, in organizing discontent, and in guiding large numbers of people in the class struggle. At the same time, the employment of this tactic enables the Communist Party to test its leadership, discipline, and organizational strength in concrete and practical situations. In effect, the struggle for immediate demands serves as a small-scale, but valuable, dress rehearsal for future revolutionary action and as a battle-hardening experience for the troops of the communist vanguard.

The cumulative goal of the "immediate-demand" tactic, therefore, is to condition the entire social climate and to prepare the ground for the eventual launching of the actual communist revolution.

IV. COORDINATION AND ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA

A. World-Wide Coordination of Communist Propaganda

1. Communist Propaganda Universally Similar

Over the years, communist propaganda throughout the world has been amazingly similar, parallel, and consistent, despite its flexibility. This has been patent in the communist line being proclaimed and followed at any given time in such widely separated countries as the USSR, Egypt, Brazil, Japan, India, and the United States. Although the emphasis might differ according to national and local conditions, the international themes sounded by the Soviet Union have been faithfully echoed by communists around the globe. Historically, whenever Soviet Russia manifested a shift or reversal in a given line, there might be a few brief delays in the corresponding switch or reversal outside the USSR; but before long, all communist parties fell into step. (40)

2. Direction by Agitprop Section in USSR

To supervise and coordinate its vast propaganda program, the Soviet Union has created and devised an elaborate and efficient machine for policy making, administration, control, and censorship. At the top is the Agitation and Propaganda Section -- commonly abbreviated as Agitprop -- which was established as a result of the Fifth World Congress of the Communist International in Moscow in June-July, 1924. (41) (42)

Recognizing agitation and propaganda to be a vital cornerstone of communist activity, the Fifth World Congress noted that until then the Comintern and the various communist parties affiliated with it had not seen fit to set up special organs for propaganda work or else, where they had, the apparatus was inadequate. It was agreed that to improve and extend agitational and propaganda activity, there was urgent need to create separate bodies within every party to guide this type of work.

The following year, the Comintern issued specific instructions as to the organizational structure of such bodies. It decreed that special agitation and propaganda departments were to be established as adjuncts to the central committees of all parties and headed by a member of the central committee. In addition, similar departments were to be established and attached to district and local committees of the various parties. (43) (44)

3. Function of Agitprop Section

In the USSR at the present time, the Agitation and Propaganda Section is a subdivision of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which is the supreme policy-making body of the Soviet Union. The Central Committee formulates the basic policies which guide the entire Soviet propaganda apparatus. Thus, propaganda

policies and decisions of the communists are established at the very highest level. Decisions of the top Soviet leaders are made with propaganda considerations in mind. This attests not only to the importance of propaganda activities in the communist organization, but also to their recognition of the need for integrating propaganda with total policy.(45) (46) (U)

Despite the range of its responsibilities, however, Agitprop is not primarily an operational agency. It does not do any major publishing, nor does it operate the Soviet radio or make motion pictures. On the basis of the broad policy decisions formed by the highest Party leadership, Agitprop determines both the general line and the specific course of action in all matters affecting Soviet opinion. It unifies and gives central direction to the vast and multiform propaganda work carried on both by the Communist Party and by the governmental and public agencies under the Party's supervision. (U)

A great part of Agitprop's attention and effort is directed toward the internal propaganda which permeates all aspects of Soviet life, but Agitprop is also the clearinghouse for all foreign propaganda of the Soviet Union. Agitprop works in close coordination with the Foreign Section of the Central Committee, which in turn supervises the Government's Foreign Ministry. (U)

FP/Unclassified per 30/1/87
CIA letter dtd 2/4/87
to HRB cmdm

The policy directives of Agitprop thus become the working directives of the domestic and international activities of Radio Moscow, the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS), the International Book Publishing Corporation, the Telegraphic News Agency (Tass), and other communication and cultural media.

Moreover, through Agitprop and the Foreign Section of the Central Committee, propaganda policy is transmitted to the Soviet diplomatic corps around the world, to the network of foreign communist parties, and to the international communist front groups, such as the World Peace Council. These foreign instruments of the Soviet propaganda apparatus also quickly become aware of any new Party line through Tass transmissions and Radio Moscow, and through Soviet newspapers, magazines, and other publications. (47)

During its existence, the Comintern is reported to have sent a number of special Moscow-trained propagandists abroad to carry on propaganda work. At one period in the 1930's, a number of trained propagandists were said to have been dispatched from the Soviet Union to assume absolute charge of agitprop sections or departments of the various foreign communist parties. These representatives allegedly were directly responsible to the international propaganda division of the Comintern.

B. Communist Propaganda Organization in the United States

1. Formation of Agitprop Apparatus

As early as 1920, a provision in the constitution of the Communist Party in the United States called for the Central Committee to organize classes for the training of propagandists, as well as study classes in the various Party units for the education of the membership as to communist ideology. One district, in 1922, approved a recommendation that a special bureau be established to be in charge of education and propaganda and that each Party subdivision form an agitation and propaganda committee.

In accordance with instructions promulgated by the Comintern as a result of the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern in 1924, the Communist Party in the United States took steps to establish an agitprop apparatus. This occurred at its national convention in August, 1925, when a National Agitprop Department was created. A member of the Central Committee was named director, assisted by an Agitprop Commission of eight members, including representatives of other Party departments and communist organizations; such as, the Organization Department, the Women's Secretariat, and the Young Communist League.* The director and his staff were responsible

* The Young Communist League has been designated by the Attorney General pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

to the Central Committee. Similar agitprop units were established on district and local levels of the Party.

2. Agitprop Work in Communist Party, USA, Today

Agitprop work in the Communist Party, USA, at the present time, comes under the jurisdiction and supervision of its National Education Department and its various district and local education departments and units. The function of this apparatus is: (1) to educate the Party membership in communist theory and practice; (2) to school and train Party leaders; and (3) to spread the doctrines of Marxism-Leninism to the non-Party masses.

Activities engaged in by the Party's educational and agitprop apparatus are manifold. It conducts day, evening, summer, and correspondence schools for Party members; teacher-training and leadership schools; and specialized schools for workers, Negroes, and nationality groups. It holds conferences, seminars, and new membership classes; and it prepares study outlines, guides, lessons, textbooks. pamphlets, leaflets, and bulletins. It undertakes research work on communist theory and philosophy. In addition, through this apparatus, the Party exercises firm control and supervision over such communist front schools as the Jefferson School of Social Science in New York City and the California Labor School in San Francisco. *

*Both of which have been designated by the Attorney General pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

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Since agitation and propaganda are an integral part of and interrelated with all aspects and phases of Party activity, the national, district, and local education departments work closely with other Party units. For example, organization departments, which frequently play a major role in planning and executing mass activities in the form of recruiting, fund raising, and special campaigns, work in close harmony with the various education departments.

The Communist Party always has given much space in its publications to ways and means of improving its agitprop work. In the mid-1930's, Party Organizer, which was issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, USA, carried a special agitprop section wherein members could present their problems and exchange experiences. In the late 1940's, a monthly bulletin called Contact, put out by the National Organization and Education Commission of the Communist Party, USA, printed various questions, ideas, and techniques involving organization, education, agitation, and propaganda.

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